



On the eve of World Environment Day

The Coastal Zone Management Aruba conducts the official opening of the 2nd Stakeholders Conference

ORANJESTAD- the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) 2nd Stakeholders Conference, which is taking place in the ballroom of the Aruba Resort, Spa & Casino through June 5 and 6 commenced with official opening ceremonies held in the ballroom of the Divi Phoenix Resort on Sunday, June 4. CZM Conference attendees from Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao and St. Eustatius were welcomed by President and CEO of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association, Jorge Pesquera, and his Excellency, the Minister of Environment, Mr. Candelario “Booshi” Wever. The opening ceremonies also introduced the Coastal Zone Management Team, a dynamic group of young professionals devoted to implementing the necessary plan for Aruba to preserve its natural environment. The team has devised a practical plan towards this end, and a financial and legal strategy to implement it. The welcome ended with a stirring presentation by accomplished dancer Wilma Kuiperi, with a slide show of Aruba’s sights and scenes as her backdrop.

June 5 is World Environment Day, and an appropriate way for the island to observe and honor the day is with this working conference, focused on conservation and preservation of what could be considered its most important natural asset, the coastline and underwater environment. Many issues will be address during this conference, including the obtaining of international certification for being pro-active in practicing protective environmental measures.

The lectures and workshops of the two-day conference have the dual purpose of education and networking, providing a framework for the formulations of objectives and strategies for the CZM. A cooperative sponsorship by the Ministries of Culture, Environment, and Infrastructure and a partnership with the private sector, such as AHATA and its associates is what is needed to establish and implement a plan that will preserve all aspects of the island’s environment. Guest speakers from around the world bring their experience and expertise in conservation to Aruba. On Monday, Keynote Speaker Joaquin Tintore Subriana discussed how strides in coastal management made a difference on Mallorca of the Balearic Islands.

Additional presentations by Gisbert Boekhoudt, Adrian Del Nevo and Hitesh Mehta offered insights on Integrated Environment Policy, findings on the Tern population of Aruba, and Ecotourism respectively. Tuesday’s program is scheduled to be opened with a welcome from the Minister of Infrastructure and Education, Marisol Lopez-Tromp, and will continue with guest speakers Kalli de Meyer of the Dutch Caribbean Nature Alliance and Nicole Esteban from the St Eustatius National Park. Bettina Pierterz and David Smith will additionally offer tips on marketing and public relations. In addition, a special development plan will be presented by Errol Sjak Shie, Frank Frijlink and Pancho Geerman Laureen Eman will act as moderator during the conference. The guest speakers have been provided courtesy of RUI Resorts, Starwood and Westin Hotels, and the Marriott Resort. Attendees of the opening ceremonies and the first day of lectures were able to examine informative presentations by various agencies concerned with the environment, with representatives explaining their purpose and goals. These booths will continue to be set up during the remainder of the conference. All interested parties are welcome to visit and listen to the lectures, which are in English, and to obtain information from the various environmental organizations. Sustainable development is the focus of this conference, with the end goal being to spur productive discussions and actions between conference participants. The break out sessions are expected to provide the basis for reports on proposed goals for CZM in regards to Scientific Research, Policy, Communications, Development & Planning.

Initiatives in safeguarding Aruba’s marine resources are scheduled to go forward before the end of 2006, beginning with three projects aimed at beautifying and protecting the Baby Beach, Arashi and Manglo Halto areas. Aruba’s beaches and marine environment are more than tourist attractions; they are the island’s treasures, meant to be enjoyed by not only visitors, but also island residents for generations to come. They are part of the legacy to be left to all who love the island and its natural beauty. It is the responsibility of everyone to protect, preserve and respect them, and this conference is aimed at developing a viable plan to that end that can be implemented thorough action and legislation.